

Romans 8



Small Group Resource
July 2026

Romans 8 Section 1



BIG Idea!

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

If someone were to ask for a summary of the Gospel, and its relevance to human beings, the book of Romans would be an excellent place to start. Romans is unusual in the sense that its author, the Apostle Paul, is not writing to the Roman church to address one specific behaviour or theological issue, as is the case in many of his letters, but to make the Gospel more accessible for those unfamiliar with Scripture's grand narrative. This being the story of God's rescue mission to humanity, which ultimately found its climax in the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth (Rom 5:18-21).

In Romans 8, we see Paul building upon his case that human hearts are hard-wired for sin and destruction. Jewish Law, Paul explains, proved incapable of curtailing these impulses. Rather, the Law only served to highlight humanity's guilt. Yet, all is not lost, for anyone who puts their hope in Jesus Christ will face no condemnation for their sins. Jesus bore the penalty for humanity's law-breaking on the cross. And not only that, but through the gift of the Holy Spirit, God makes His home within our very being. This allows for the supernatural transformation of a believer's heart, rewiring our sinful desires so that we may reject sin and death and instead desire life and peace (Rom 8:6)



DIGGING Deeper!

Context: Paul was wholly devoted to the Gospel message. He saw Jesus as the fulfilment of Scripture's grand narrative. Jesus as the hero of humanity's story. However Paul was, by his own admission, a "Pharisee, descended from Pharisees", privy to a wealth of understanding that gentile believers simply didn't have (Acts 2 23:6). Paul understood the prophetic tradition from which Jesus had emerged. He understood humanity's longstanding problem of sin, and he understood why Jesus had to die in order to free humanity from their sin. The church in Rome, separated by distance and culture, knew little of this grand narrative. The situation was made worse when the Roman emperor Claudius, expelled all Jewish people in 49 AD. Paul's letter to the church in Rome, follows the return of Jewish citizens in the year 54 AD, amidst tensions between Roman believers and their returning Jewish brothers and sisters. The latter group felt that the church had lost its connection to its Jewish roots. Indeed, many Roman Christians may have begun to ask why they needed this connection to Israel's story at all, given that Jesus had come to save everyone. Paul provides us with a wonderfully clear, yet grounded, summarisation of the Gospel message. We cannot, he argues, hope to understand what Jesus did apart from God's grand narrative, revealed in Scripture through the Jewish people. Yet, humans cannot hope to live in the life of the Spirit, unless they understand that the Law was a temporary measure. A 'guardian' or 'tutor' in lieu of Christ's sacrifice on the cross (Gal 3:24).

1

PRAYER POINT

What can you pray for this week, for yourself, your family and friends?

2

ACTION POINT

How do we apply the message and hope of the Gospel in our everyday lives?

3

MISSION POINT

How can we communicate the Gospel to be people who have never heard it, or who have heard only part of it?

Start by checking in with how everyone is doing and ask a state of your soul question.



Today's Reading: Romans 8: 1-11

READ the verses out loud.

THEN and THERE

Consider Imagine a church made up of two ethnic groups who formerly had very little to do with each other. Now imagine that one ethnic group had conquered the other and that both cultures traditionally considered the other to be 'unclean' or lesser in some capacity.

Read Digging Deeper.

DISCUSS

QUESTIONS to Consider

1. What sticks out to you about these verses?
2. If someone asked what Christians believed, how would you answer them?
3. How do you understand the purpose of the Law, both in the Old Testament and the New?
4. Overall, do you find this chapter of Romans encouraging, or are you left with more questions?
5. Which of Paul's letters are your favourite? Why is that?

PRAY for each other that we would have opportunity to talk about the gospel to our friends and connections.

Romans 8 Section 2



BIG Idea!

ADOPTED HEIRS

Having established humanity's need for a saviour in the first half of his letter, Paul shifts his focus from the past, to the present. Though we were once dead in our sins, those who put their faith in Jesus are welcomed into a new life; life in the Spirit. Humanity is free from sin's "obligation" thanks to the Spirit's supernatural transformation of the human heart. This transformation frees the Christian into a new existence, guided by the gentle touch of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:12-14). This change of heart is also accompanied by a change in status. Paul explains that our relationship with God Himself has been completely reworked. Jesus willingly exchanged His perfect record with ours, we have been adopted as children of God. We are co-heirs with Jesus in His Kingdom, afforded the same intimate relationship He enjoys with the Father and with the Spirit (Rom 8:17). Our motivation, therefore, is that we seek to obey the Father like a child obeying their parents, secure in the knowledge that we are loved more than we could ever imagine. Paul reminds us, however, that these provisions are temporary. We will not receive our full inheritance until Christ returns to restore the world to its proper order. Until then, we live in the 'now, but not yet' Kingdom. Meaning, just as we share in Christ's glory, we may also be asked to share in His suffering (Rom 8:17). To this end, the Holy Spirit functions as a guide and a helper. A supernatural foretaste for what's to come (Rom 8:19-24).



DIGGING Deeper!

Context:

The Roman Empire was no stranger to heirs via adoption. In fact, the reigning Emperor at the time of Paul's letter, and those that followed would often adopt extended family members to allow them to take over the Imperial mantle. Paul's comparison is bold by design. There was no greater power in the ancient world than Rome and here Paul compares new believers to the most lofty station imaginable. Paul's claim naturally invites comparison. One kingdom was ruled by a dictator, built upon military strength and fear. The other, God's Kingdom, featured a suffering Prince. One who willingly exchanged His good fortune for the deserved punishment laid against His people. The fact that Rome carried out Christ's execution, and by proxy our execution, should not be lost here. Paul reminds his audience that Christ's nature is one of loving sacrifice. Just as He laid His life down for others, so we are called to do the same. Whether that sacrifice would be a literal execution (as would be the case for Paul) or a life of small sacrifices, Paul encourages us to keep our eyes fixed on the total restoration that God promises. Rome may be in the ascendancy now, but God's Kingdom is greater. Indeed, all creation looks forward to the day when it can be fully reunited with its Creator (Rom 8:21)

1

PRAYER POINT

What can you pray for this week, for yourself, your family and friends?

2

ACTION POINT

If someone asked us to explain the function of the Holy Spirit, how would you describe it?

3

MISSION POINT

What might the Spirit be saying for you to do today for someone else?

Start by checking in with how everyone is doing and ask a state of your soul question.



Today's Reading: Romans 8: 12-25

READ the verses out loud.

Read Digging Deeper.

DISCUSS

QUESTIONS to Consider

1. What sticks out to you about these verses?
2. Is the idea of being a child of God comforting or challenging?
3. Do you feel the guidance of the Holy Spirit in your life?
4. Have there been occasions when you felt the Spirit leading you to do something in particular?
5. What do you make of Paul's words that we, and all Creation, are "groaning" for God's restoration?

PRAY for each other that we would see how God wants us to be a part of his global mission.

Romans 8 Section 3



BIG Idea!

ULTIMATE WORTH

Paul believed that the role of the Holy Spirit was to guide and strengthen believers in all areas of life. While it might not be surprising to hear that the Spirit's role extends to prayer, the manner of the Spirit's involvement certainly is. According to Paul, the Spirit's concern for us goes beyond the simple who's and what's of our prayers, to the deepest parts of our being. Indeed, the Spirit dwells with us, sharing in our most treasured hopes, the likes of which we can barely explain. In this way, the Spirit weaves harmony between us and our Creator, drawing our hearts closer to His. In much the same way that God works the evil of our world for good, God also calls the children of the first Adam to step into a new identity, brothers and sisters of the new Adam; Jesus Christ. This new standing, Paul insists, is the highest honour (Rom 8:30-31). At a time when Christians were facing increasing persecution, Paul drew the comparison between God's own Son, who Himself was wrongfully convicted, and the Church. Yet, the fact that Jesus suffered on our behalf, Paul adds, should empower us to endure these hardships. The Christian can rest in the knowledge that they are loved beyond comprehension, for even the Son of God was not withheld. Indeed, Jesus laid His own life down for us. So no matter the circumstances, nothing can separate us from the love of God. (Rom 8:38-39).



DIGGING Deeper!

Context: In the intertestamental period there emerged a popular messianic worldview known today as Jewish Apocalypticism. Within this view, there existed two distinct ages; the 'Present Age' and the 'Age to Come'. The Present Age was one of suffering, with God's people living under foreign rule. The Age to Come, by contrast, would see the kingdom of Israel restored, with God almighty preserving His people under His direct kingship. The messiah, within this understanding, was expected to be a military leader, in the mould of the Maccabee's, who would begin this grand process via the expulsion of Israel's gentile rulers.

In verses 35 to 37, the Apostle Paul seeks to modify this existing understanding. His list of potential afflictions, and reference to Psalm 44, serves to highlight the paradoxical nature of Christ's Messiahship. Against all expectations, the strength of Jesus' ministry came from His apparent defeat. Moreover, the Kingdom Jesus established had not been limited to ethnic Jews, nor had His Kingdom citizens been carried away to safety. Rather, God's people were 'preserved' in the eternal sense - a reality Paul understood to be much greater than the original notion. Paul understood our time to be the age between ages. The Messiah has arrived and the Kingdom of God has been established, but it is not yet time to rest. Indeed, there is still work to be done. While this may very well lead to suffering, it is not because God doesn't love us. In fact, the example of Jesus on the Cross is exactly what Paul points to as evidence that in even our suffering we are joined with Christ. Participants in God's renewal project (Rom 8:17).

1

PRAYER POINT

What can you pray for this week, for yourself, your family and friends?

2

ACTION POINT

Should the knowledge that we cannot be separated from God's love change the way that we live? How?

3

MISSION POINT

Using God's example of love how might we change the way we treat other people?

Start by checking in with how everyone is doing and ask a state of your soul question.



Today's Reading: Romans 8: 26 - 39

READ the verses out loud.

THEN and THERE

Consider this part of Romans from the perspective of people who were facing life-threatening persecution.

Read Digging Deeper.

DISCUSS

QUESTIONS to Consider

1. What sticks out to you about these verses?
2. How often do you find time to pray?
3. Do you feel the Holy Spirit at work within your prayers and/or within your being?
4. Can you think of an example when God worked something bad, into something good?
5. Do you think of yourself as being eternally loved by God?

PRAY for each other that we would see how God wants us to be a part of his global mission.